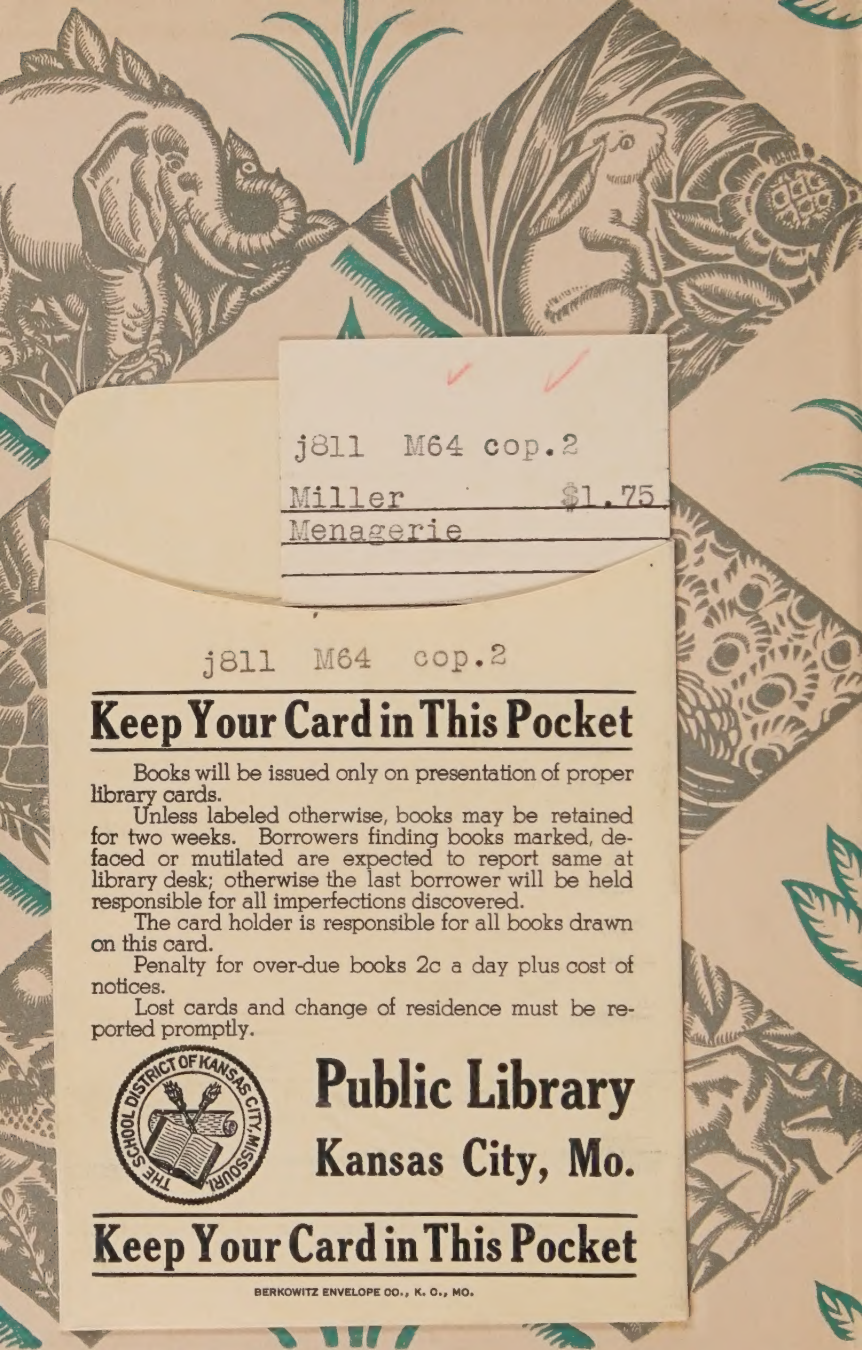
MENAGERIE

MARY BRITTON MILLER



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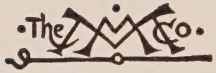

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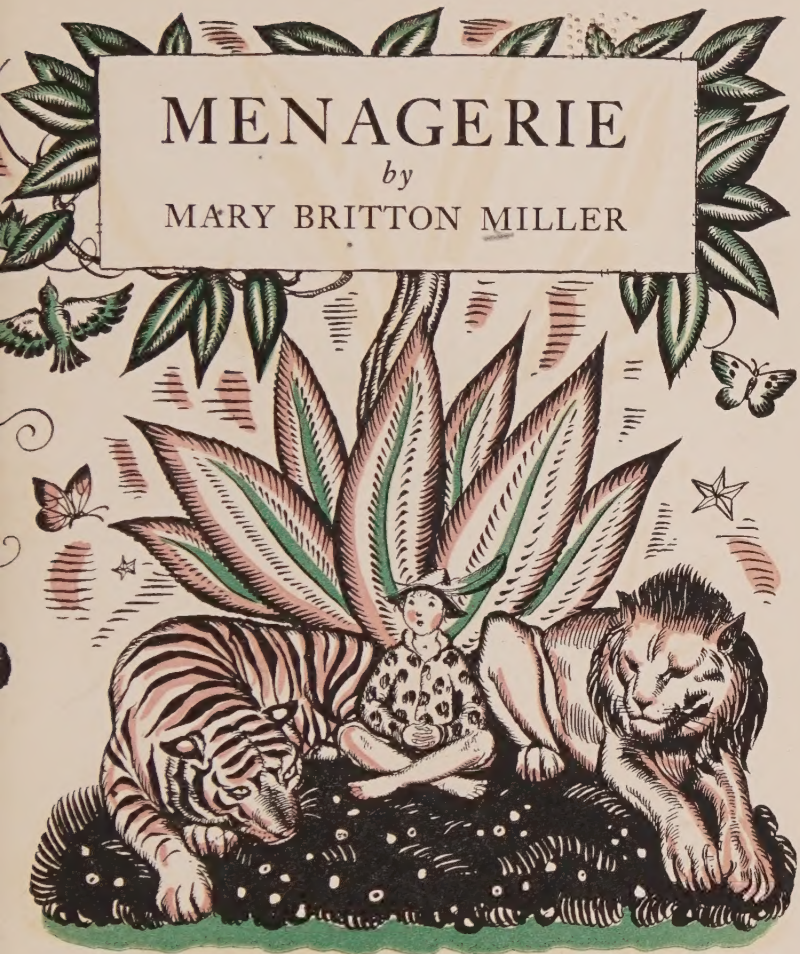
MENAGERIE

by

MARY BRITTON MILLER



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DEDICATION

To every calf and caterpillar,
To darling Charles and Jimmy Miller,
To lambs that frisk and colts that whinny,
To a boy named Richard Spinney,
To a child in France called Paul
Who cannot stand without a fall;
To every child beneath the sun,
To little Stephen Elliston.

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PART I

MENAGERIE

SHETLAND PONY

Clip, clip, clip,
Little Shetland pony! Hit
Your sharp feet upon the road.
You are sturdy, sure, and strong.
Little pony, clip along.

With my legs I press your fat
Shaggy stomach as I sit
Very safely on your back.
Little Shetland pony, clip,
Clip, clip, clip.

Fly, fly, fly, fly!
All the passers-by will say,
As they see you clip along,
"There's a little runaway
Pony going by."

Oh, oh, oh, oh!
How I love to ride you, fleet
Little Shetland pony. Go
Along the road with your sharp feet,
Clip, clip, clip.

CAT

The black cat yawns,
Opens her jaws,
Stretches her legs,
And shows her claws.

Then she gets up
And stands on four
Long stiff legs
And yawns some more.

She shows her sharp teeth,
She stretches her lip,
Her slice of a tongue
Turns up at the tip.

Lifting herself
On her delicate toes,
She arches her back
As high as it goes.

She lets herself down
With particular care,
And pads away
With her tail in the air.

DOG

Mongrel cur
With a cut on your face,
Running away
From boys in chase,

Fleeing down the alley
With your tail tucked in,
Rib bones showing
Underneath your skin,

Hind quarters twisted,
Head turned round,
Dragging a rope
On the muddy ground—

Your eyes in their sockets
Roll around with fear,
The wind is blowing over
The tab of your ear.

If I could catch your torturers,
I'd shake and beat them up;
I'd spend my only dollar
To make you *my* pup.

I'd beg and tease my mother
To let me take you home
To a place with rugs and carpets
And cushions, to lie down.

I'd put you in the bathtub,
And scrub and wash you white,
And let you sleep inside my bed
Where it's warm at night.

KITTEN

Run and hump up
Your back, kitty!
Jump on your black
And white paws, kitty.

Make yourself stiff
As a rail, kitty!
Then turn and play
With your tail, kitty.

Fly right away
Through the air, kitty,
Fluffing your white
And black tail, kitty.

When you alight
On the floor, kitty,
Scamper away
Through the door, kitty.

CANARY

Canary bird with beady eye,
You have to hop, you cannot fly.
Canary bird with useless wing,
Hop upon your little swing.

Tip back your head and drop a trill,
And then another, from your bill.
Make your stomach swell and puff.
Shake your feathers and your fluff.

Climb the scale with your shrill note.
Burst the bubbles in your throat.
Do you think you're in the air,
Or on a tree bough swinging there?

HORSE

Good old horse, I love to come
Into your stall that smells of hay
And horses' hair all steaming wet.
I love to hear you stamp and tread,
To slap your flank and try to get
Past your hind legs to your head.

When I am there, I love to stand
And feel a sudden bath of spray.
I love your whinnies while you try
To get your nose inside my hand
And watch me with a whitish eye,
Continuing to whiff and neigh.

I love to put a little bit
Of sugar on my open hand,
I love the feeling of your lip
Just shaving me with hair and froth,
I love the way you nibble it
Without a finger taken off.

FOAL

Come trotting up
Beside your mother,
Little skinny.

Lay your neck across
Her back, and whinny,
Little foal.

You think you're a horse
Because you can trot—
But you're not.

Your eyes are so wild,
And each leg is as tall
As a pole;

And you're only a skittish
Child, after all,
Little foal.

LAMB

You find it difficult, poor lamb,
To get a drop of milk to eat,
You have to run beside your dam
And dodge between her cloven feet,
And on your forelegs find a teat
And pull it fiercely while you can,
Poor lamb.

You wag your tail with sheer delight,
But long before you're nearly through
Kneeling down to take your bite,
She rams her hind legs into you
While she crops, then up you spring
And do a little gamboling—
Silly thing.

BULL

As I sit here upon this wall,
It seems to me I see a bull.
He looks to me too powerful
To be a cow. He has not got
Any cowish look at all.
His horns are short, his head is wide,
And he's tossing it beside.

I want to cross the field and go
Up the hill, but there's the bull
Looking strong and powerful,
Tossing his head. He stamps his hoof,
Yet I do not really know
If he is watching me at all
As I sit here upon this wall.

If I started to explore
The woods beyond this grazing bull,
It would be something terrible
If he should charge me. He would run
With lowered head and horns that gore,
Snorting fire. *I wish I knew*
What this bull intends to do.

COW

The cow is kind as she can be.
She brushes off the flies
With her swishing tail, and she
Turns around and looks at me
With the gentlest eyes.

Her breath is warm and smells of sweet
Clover and new mown hay.
She backs around and moves her feet,
And lets me try to milk her teat
In the nicest way.

She shakes her hide to lift the flies,
And swishes up her tail,
And turns her head around, and tries
To thank me with her gentle eyes.
She never kicks the pail.

CALF

Hitched up to your twisted tether,
With your front legs wide apart,
And your hind legs near together,
It seems to me you're altogether
A delightful little calf.
You make me laugh.

You kick your back feet out, and then
Your front feet, and stand still again.
With the eyes of hind or hart
You look at me, and don't know whether
To start and run around your tether,
Or not to start.

Then suddenly you go quite crazy,
And trample up the grass and clover,
And kick your pail of bran right over,
And get your legs caught in your tether,
And act as though you're altogether
Crazy, little calf.

HEN AND CHICKS

The hen, with all her little chicks
Around her, tries to pick
For grains of corn and other food
That she can scatter for her brood.
When she pecks at corn or oat,
Every single little chick
Fluttering about her, will
Set to pecking with its bill.
The hen is proud of her small brood.

She nods her head upon her throat
And the darling little things
Raise their tiny yellow wings,
That look like shoulder blades. and try
To flutter up; they cannot fly,
They flap and hop and run around.
The good old mother pecks and picks
And scatters grain about the ground
To feed her darling little chicks.

DONKEY

Little donkey, little ass,
Why are your ears so long?
Little donkey, little ass,
Where has your forelock gone?
Little donkey, little ass,
How did you learn to bray?

Little gray-haired foolish one,
Why do you never neigh?
You're not a pony or a horse,
Little donkey, little ass;
What relation anyway
To your family are they?

PEACOCK

Thrust your head out like a hissing snake,
Flap all your wing feathers, proudy, and take
A swift rush forward and back, and then
Shake yourself out in front of your hen.
Spread your wonderful tail with a whirr,
Open your fan in front of her.

O my goodness
Gracious sakes,
The peacock
Is opening his fan.
You never saw
Such a sight in your life!
He's showing it off
In front of his wife,
And shaking himself
As hard as he can.

Shake out the feathers on every quill
With a whirr and a swish, proud bird, until
You've opened your tail, all gold and green
Around your blue throat, like the fan of a queen—
Your beautiful tail with its gorgeous dyes,
All jeweled with glittering peacocks' eyes.

O my goodness
Gracious sakes,
The peacock
Is opening his fan.
You never saw
Such a sight in your life!
He's showing it off
In front of his wife,
And shaking himself
As hard as he can.

PARROT

Parrot, lift
Your scaly claw!
Bite the bar
Of your round cage
With a squeak!
Open up
Your angry beak,
With a squawk
And a shrill yell—
Won't you talk?
Parrot, please
Say "Hell."

Parrot, rage
And roll your eyes;
Make each feather
Move and rise
On your skin
Like a green shell;

Twist your neck,
And bite the cage,
Squawk and scream
And yell—
O parrot,
Please
Say "Hell."

They say
That sailors
Who have seen
Wild jungles
Where the beasts and birds,
Are fiercer far
Than dove and lamb,
Taught you all
These awful words.
Parrot—please
Say "Damn."

BILLYGOAT

Goat, you have an evil eye,
An evil eye, an evil eye.
Your head is turned a little to,
A little to, a little to
One side. O goat with evil eye,
What do you intend to do,
Intend to do, intend to do?

Horn-headed goat, if you should try,
If you should try, if you should try
To butt me with your crooked horn,
Just as sure as I am born,
As I am born, as I am born,
I'd run my head that has no horn,
That has no horn, that has no horn,
Right into you, right into you,
I'd run my head right into you.

HIPPOPOTAMUS

Hippopotamus, you are
A hundred times as big
As a Hog.
Your belly's ninety times the size
Of a Pig.
You have dreadful bulging eyes
And a monstrous snout,
And your mouth is just about
Like a whale's,
And it's bristling, besides,
With a million nails.

Hippopotamus, you're far
The most horrible and big
Creature that I ever saw.
Whale-sized alligator-pig,
Opening wide your fearful jaw,
What a *nasty* thing you are!

BEAR

Bear, bear,
Stand up straight!
Cross the cage
At a bearish gait.
Lift up your forepaws
And pray for meat.
Balance your weight
On your two hind feet.

Bear, bear,
Sit on your seat,
Stick out your hind legs
And two hind feet,
Lift up your forepaws
And pray for meat,
Open your mouth
For something to eat.

Bear, bear,
I've nothing but
A paper bag
And one peanut;
I'll throw it at your stomach,
While you sit,
And you'll roll yourself right over,
Hunting for it.

MOUNTAIN GOAT

(In the Zoo)

Mountain goat
With cloven feet,
And an upper lip that goes
Like a little rabbit's nose,
And a pointed beard that moves
Up and down upon your throat,
When you try to eat—

You are hungry,
Mountain goat
With twisted horns and cloven feet.
You are trying hard to get
Your sheep's face with its bearded throat,
And your ram's horns, sticking out
Through the wire net.

Mountain goat
With cloven feet,
It is scandalous, I think,
That little children offer you
Paper bags, and bits of pink
Paper that they've taken off
Chewing gum, to eat.

ELEPHANT

The elephant is tall.
He stands up in the air
Upon his giant legs.
He's bald; he has no hair
Nor any fur at all.
He stands up very high
Upon his legs and I
Feel very, very small.

I simply love to stand
And watch the elephant.
The elephant is not
Beautiful. He's Grand.
He does all sorts of tricks,
The elephant has got
A nose with which he picks
Up objects like a hand.
I love the way he flings
This nose of his about
And coils it like a snake
And makes it stiffen out.
I love the way it swings
And stands on end. He'll take
Up many little things
And toss them to his snout.

MONKEY

The monkey loves to grab and snatch
And hang himself up by the tail,
Or sit upon the floor and scratch
Himself with a long finger-nail.

He'll use his arms for legs, and go
Upon all fours, around and round,
Dragging his tail behind, and throw
His hind legs upward from the ground.

Then suddenly he'll leap in air
And reach a human hand to swing
Another monkey here and there,
And jump about the cage with him.

His wizened face looks like an old,
Old man—and sometimes he will stand
Upon two legs, and try to hold
Another monkey by the hand.

ZEBRA

How I wish someone would tame
This charming horse so strong and trim,
With his pony's tail and mane,
And his finely arching back
And the stylish white and black
Stripes all over him.

I'd *love* to dress in pantaloons
And sit upon this charming thing,
With painted stars and crescent moons
Upon my face. I'd be a clown,
And ride the Zebra up and down,
All around the circus ring.

Nobody has tamed this wild
Striped horse, though men have tried.
He'd make a pony for a child,
But nobody has tamed him yet,
Or found it possible to get
A really pleasant kind of ride.

CAMEL

O camel in the zoo,
You don't do any of the things
They tell me that you used to do
In Egypt, and in other lands,
Carrying potentates and kings
Across the burning desert sands
With gorgeous trappings made of blue
And scarlet silks to cover you.

Your humps are carried on your back
Just the way they always were,
You thrust your old head up and back,
And make your neck go in and out,
And spill the foam upon your fur,
And writhe and jerk and rear about,
But kneel no more upon the sands
To mount the kings of eastern lands.

LION

Lion, you were once the King
Of every single living thing,
In forests where the wild beasts prey
Upon each other night and day,
Your fearful roaring used to make
All God's other creatures quake,
When in the jungle with a rush
You crashed through trees and underbrush:

But now you're prisoned in the Zoo,
And nobody's afraid of you,
You've thrown yourself upon the floor
Too sorrowful to even roar,
Lying in the dust, instead
Of holding high your kingly head.
O lion, you were made to be
Proud, majestic, wild and free;
Jungle, forest, glade and fen
You will never see again.
Rest your poor head upon the floor—
Try to sleep a little more.

TIGER

The tiger in his rage
Pads slowly to and fro.
With fiercely lowered head,
And slow, deliberate tread
He walks the cage.

Controlled in every limb,
He pads behind the bars,

Moving with cat-like grace
And never changing pace,
Trapped and caged in.

With movements like a cat
He crouches to and fro.
He turns, and turns around,
Slowly, without a sound,
This way and that.

The tiger in his cage,
Striped like a splendid cat,
Paces with cat-like tread
And lowered tail and head,
Burning with rage.

School

BULLFROG

You have the eye,
Gold and green,
Of a dragon,
And the back,
Green and black,
Of a dragon,
And the sheen,
Green and gold,
Of a dragon—
And the cold,
Cold stomach
Of a bullfrog.

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Beside the stream,
Upon the marsh,
You roll your green
And golden eye,
You blow your harsh
And froggy note,
You swell your dry
And froggy throat,
Beside the stream,
Upon the marsh
You croak the croak
Of a bullfrog.

RABBIT

Why do you beat
So fast, rabbit?
Why do you hold
Your foot lifted up
From the grass, rabbit,
Moving your little cold
Nose when you eat—
Are you scared, rabbit?

Your frightened heart
Goes trip, trip, trip,
In your fur, rabbit.
Why do you blink
Your eyes in my face,
And tremble your pink
Fluted ears when I stir—
Are you scared, rabbit?

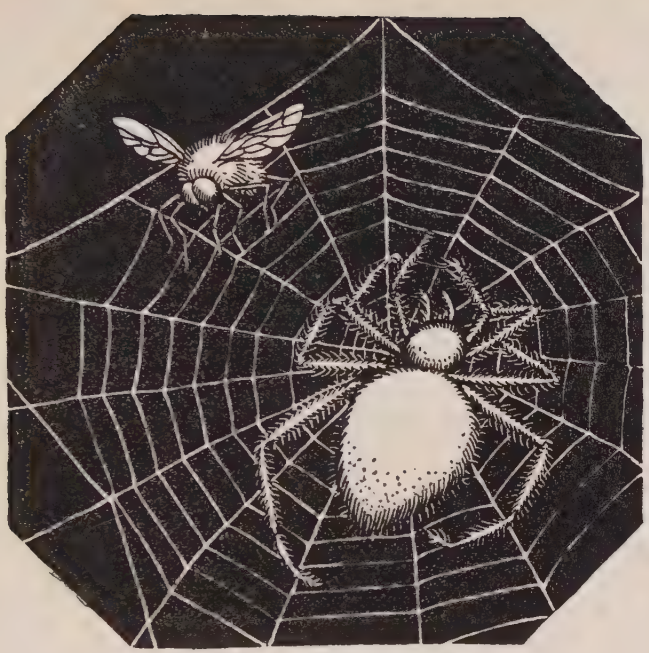
If I should start
You would jump
Like a hare, rabbit;
I should see
Only your tail, or the hump
Of your back,
Here and there
Through the grass, rabbit.

CHIPMUNK

Darling,
Sit on the mossy stump
And curl your brush of red
Furry tail above your head—
Make it jump.

Darling,
Make your heart beat quick
Underneath your fur,
And your little bright eye flick—
Stay where you were.

Darling,
Turn around and round
In your wee paws the nut you've found.
Try to eat it, darling, but
Make no sound.



VERY TINY CREATURES

In the grass,
In the grass,
Spiders spin
Their silver webs.
There are crickets
Black and brittle,

And the grasshoppers
Make spittle
On the blades
And flower heads.
Song birds sing
From spike and flower,
And the very,
Very little
Colored insects
Climb the grass.

A bee hums,
A hornet passes,
Cobwebs cross
Your hands and face,
A bird cries,
And from the grasses
Grasshoppers
And crickets spring;
The dew dries
Inside the grasses,
And you hear
The crickets sing.

SNAKE

When the seeded grasses make
A little swishing sound,
And you think that you have seen
Water trickling on the ground,
When there is a flash of green,
And a light that seems to pass,
And the writhing emerald snake
Glides along inside the grass,

You cross the field with cautious tread,
Looking in the grass to see
Where the snake is crawling to.
You step on him—and suddenly
The emerald serpent coils and springs
And twists about, and shoots his head
Upward through the squirming rings,
And darts his waving tongue at you.

WOODCHUCK

Have you ever been
In the back of a car
And heard someone scream,
"Look there!"
And twisted your head,
While everyone cried,
"No, where?"

And thought you had seen,
While everyone tried
To see
The hedges stir
By the road, and said,
"O Gee."

The woodchuck ran,
Without any feet
Without any head,
He did,
Into the hedge
Like a chestnut burr,
And hid.

BATS

In the early dark of night,
Just before you're sent to bed,
When the bats begin their flight,
When you cover up your head
While they flicker through the air
Trying to get in your hair——

When they shave you with their wings,
Weaving patterns in the air,
And you're sure the nasty things
Are going to tangle up your hair,
When the frogs begin to cry
And the lightning-bugs to fly——

Then the lightning-bug's small spark,
And the shadows growing blue,
And the voices of the dark
Send a shiver over you:
When it's time to go to bed
And the bats flit past your head.

WHOSE TRACKS ARE THESE?

Is there anyone to know
What tracks of darling little wild
Animals have marked the snow,
Before the feet of man or child
Dressed in shoe or rubber boot
Came a-tramping through the snow?
Perhaps a little bird has been
Hopping by between these pines
Where the snow is fresh and clean,
For where it lies so pure and deep
There are tracks of thread-like feet;
And here a rabbit must have put
His little, lifted, shivering foot,
When he made up his mind to go
Limping off into the snow;
In these tracks his little paws
Crossed the marks of squirrels' claws.
Look! Here's the place the squirrel brushed
His long gray tail into the drift
When the frozen rabbit rushed
Past him. Can't you see him lift
His tail up, when he ran below
Those fir tree branches white with snow?

MOUSE

Are you hiding in your hole,
Little string-tailed mole,
Or in the fireplace,
Little whisker-face—
Little bead-eyed, bat-eared one,
To which corner did you run?

You crept under the door
And ran across the floor.
Everybody shrieked and cried
"A mouse," while you ran off to hide.
If you'd been a lion or
A bear, you'd not have scared them more.

Tiny sausage dressed in fur,
Nobody could hear you stir;
But you gave them all a scare
Like a lion or a bear.
Won't you peek out of the place
You've hid in, little whisker-face?

NESTS

Hi, little birds
With yellow wings!
Where did you find
All the different things
That built the warm nest
Where your children are fed?
Here is a feather
From some bird's breast,
And a long white hair
From somebody's head,
And here are some straws
As yellow as grain,
And pieces of hair
From a horse's mane.

Hi, little bird,
Did you and your mate
Use your bill or your claws
To twist up and plait
These white hairs and feathers
And long dry straws,
That furnish the warm and comfortable nest,
Where all of your little
Children were born
Without any feathers,
Under your breast?

SNOW BIRDS

Aren't you frozen to your marrows
Little starlings, wrens, and sparrows?
When the snow is cold and bitter,
I can hear you whirr and twitter
In the ivy vines and hedges,
On the wires' frozen edges.
Aren't you hungry when there's neither
Little fly nor flea nor spider?
Fluttering snow birds, I will scatter
Broken crumbs of bread and cracker
On the snow when you are very
Hungry for a bug or berry.
English sparrows, wrens, and starlings,
Come and eat, my little darlings!

BUMBLEBEE

Bumblebee,
In your black and yellow coat,
What are you doing
Way down there,
Wallowing around
Like a drunken bear?

I'm drinking honey
From a foxglove's throat,
Rubbing off the pollen
On my fuzzy hair.

.

WHIPPOORWILL

Are you hidden
In forest or wood or bog,
Or up in a tree
Or down on the ground?
Are you a bird,
Or a toad, or a frog,
Or only a sound?

Who cries out
When the night is still
And the wood is dark
And I'm all alone,
Over and over—
Whippoorwill!
From a tree or a stone?

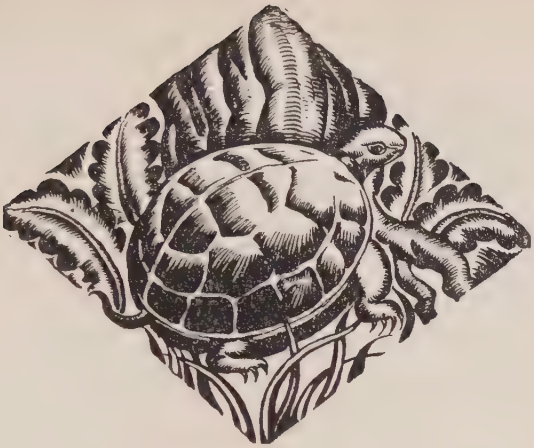
I can see the wood
And a firefly's spark,
And one bright star
Above the hill.
But who is crying
Way off in the dark—
Whippoorwill?

ROBIN

Robin with fat red breast,
I see your robin's nest
Up in the lilac tree.
O robin, there are three
Queer little blinky-eyed
Featherless birds inside.
Their mouths are opened wide.

Down in the grass below
Your robin's nest you go
Hunting on threadlike feet
A worm for them to eat.
You pick and peck, you cock
Your head, and hop, hop, hop,
You run and then you stop.

O robin, you have found
A worm inside the ground!
Drag him up, long and whole,
Out of his earthy hole.
Your little, blinky-eyed
Children have cried and cried
For him, with bills stretched wide.



TURTLE

Won't you please come out
Of your shell, like a snail?
Stretch your snake's head out,
With its eyes like a toad,
And your elephant's tail.
Stick out your four
Little elephant's legs,
And walk down the road.

CRAB

Crab, you are exactly like
A devil, with your teeth and prongs.
Behind, you wear a pointed spike;
In front, your eyes are bulging out
Where your face belongs.
On spiders' legs you crawl about
Under your shell, upon the sand,
Holding up a purple claw
Like a devil's hand.

FISHES

In the waters of the sea
Monstrous creatures live and swim
With gigantic fins and tails.
There are sharks that swallow men,
There are great sea-going whales.
Hippopotami have throats
Smaller than the nightingale's
In comparison with these.
Whales and sharks can swallow men,
Through the waves they go like boats,
Larger than Leviathan.

But the little minnow swims,
With his tiny tail and fins,
Through my fingers wet and cool.
He is delicate and slim,
And his belly shaves the sand
At the bottom of the pool;
I lean down and look at him
And think how beautiful he is;
Silver sides and fins are his.
I can take him in my hand
And close my fingers over him.

CHILD'S DREAM

In the middle of the night
A child lay in bed.
The darkness was deep,
He heard the spiders creep.
A star hung a bright beam,
Like a spider's thread,
Just above his head.
The child had a strange dream
When he went to sleep.

He was standing in a forest
As large as the world.
All the lovely green ferns
Had their fronds unfurled.
He wore a green feather
In the corner of his hat,
And his coat was made of leather
From a leopard's back.
He heard strange noises;
Somebody cried;
He turned to look around him;
He was terrified.

Down from a tree top
A dragon-fly came,
And turned as he watched it
To an aeroplane.
A bat like an old glove
Flapped across his hair;
The dragon-fly went planing
Off through the air.
He saw his little kitten
Flying out across
The boughs of a beech tree,
Like a winged horse.

In a bright pool of moonlight
In the center of the wood,
With the moon on his shirt front,
A big toad stood.
A robin with his hat on
And a cane through his wing,
Came from a shadow
And walked away with him.

A canary bird was swinging
On a cherry blossom stem
Among the shining petals
Singing songs to them.

The tiger and the lion
Were absolutely free,
They were lying down together
Beneath a chestnut tree.
They were holding each other's
Great velvet paws,
Like two loving brothers.
They'd drawn in their claws.

The rabbits and the chipmunks,
The woodchucks and the moles
Were peeping out of burrows
And leafy nests and holes.
A herd of heavy elephants
Were tramping down the plants,
Stepping on the spiders' webs
And all the little ants.
They were snatching at the monkeys' tails
That hung from the trees.
The monkeys were chattering
Like Turks and Japanese.

The wild striped zebra
Was pacing up and down
Between the tallest pine trees,
Led by a clown.

Out of a thicket,
Where the boughs looked black,
Rushed his chestnut pony
With a girl on his back.
The moonlight was shining
On his wild frightened eyes.
The little girl tossed him
A dozen butterflies.

The dog he had rescued
Limped through the wood,
His paw stained with blood.

A puppy dog came running
Hind side before,
A slipper on his paw.
The frightened foal was trotting
Beside a chestnut horse,
On the green moss.

His eyes on a level
With the buttons of his coat,
Stood the billygoat.
He was standing on his hind legs,
Very sly and cute,
Looking like a devil,
Playing on the flute.

The old sow was running
As fast as she could,
With her little pigs behind her,
Through the dewy wood.

The peacock opened out
His tail with a flourish,
And strutted about.

Off on the marshes
He heard a bullfrog croak.
Through the tall rushes,
In green and golden mail,
A dragon was approaching
As slowly as a snail.
He sniffed the smell of smoke.

From all the seas and oceans,
From the north and southern poles,
Fishes left the water
And danced about in shoals.
They tripped on the cool moss
On their fins and tails,
And the little silver minnows
Were dancing with the whales.

A snake in the fruit tree,
Where the apple hangs
Darted out her fangs.

The parrot was teaching
The monkeys how to speak,
Sharpening his beak.

A spider was climbing
A bright star's ray.
A screech owl was crying
Far, far away.

Little drops were dripping,
The wood was very cool,
All the leaves and flowers
Were strange and beautiful.

Across a patch of moonlight
He saw a child run,
With a small lamb behind him,
Calling someone.

He heard a voice answer
"Whippoorwill."
The owl had stopped crying,
The wood was still.

He shivered a little,
The moon dropped down the hill.
He stood in pitchy darkness,
A star fell in the grass,
It shone between the wet blades
Like a bit of isinglass.

He waited, and listened—
The night was still and deep;
All God's little creatures
Were breathing in their sleep.

He suddenly felt sleepy,
So he stumbled out across
The dark, quiet forest
Until he found the tree
Where the tiger and the lion
Were sleeping on the moss.
He lay down beside them,
In his leopard's coat,
And slept till the morning
Against the tiger's throat.

PART II

OUTDOORS

GROVE

Come, come
Into the wood!
Over our heads
The branches sway,
Brown, pink,
Yellow, gray.
Wind in the branches
Climbing the hill—
Hush, child,
Be still.

Little flowers
As small as stars,
Down on the moss
Where the young ferns grow,
Step on the moss
With a quiet tread,
Little flowers
As white as snow,
Step on the moss
All tipped with red
Quietly, quietly,
Quietly.

STREAM

Look! Look!
See the brook!
Waters pass
Like silver glass,
Over stones
And over pebbles.

Where the brook
Is deep and dark,
Minnows swim
Like silver arrows.
Where it's still,
The water quivers.

When the flies
And little sparrows
Dip themselves,
The water shivers.

SHORE

Play on the seashore
And gather up shells,
Kneel in the damp sands
Digging wells.

Run on the rocks
Where the seaweed slips,
Watch the waves
And the beautiful ships.

Find dead crabs
And ivory bones,
Slices of pearl
And moony stones.

Take off your stockings
And wet your feet,
Wading in the water
Where pools are deep.

Wind, blow spray on me!
Roll, roll, deep blue sea!
Wash the caverns and the caves,
Lap the rocks
And shells and stones,
Wash the little fishes' bones.
Roll, roll, deep blue waves!
Wind, blow spray on me!

FIELD

We will run
Across the meadows,
Through the sunlight
And the shadows.

Where the soft
Warm wind is blowing,
Dandelion seeds
Are snowing.

Spear of grass
And head of flower—
What a lovely
Summer shower!

Summer, summer,
Sun and sky!
All the grass
And leaves are stirred;
On the willow tree
A bird,
On a flower
A butterfly.

Summer, summer!
Flowers and weeds,
Bits of flax
Are snowing by,
Carrying
Dandelion seeds.

THINGS I SEE

Under a toadstool
In the wood,
A violet stood.

Frost and snow
And flowers, are
Like a star.

Robins cover
Birds' nests,
With their breasts.

Fireflies fly
And light their lights
On summer nights.

Pollywogs come
From frogs' eggs.
They have no legs.

Jacks-in-the-Pulpit
Grow in the woods.
They have hoods.

Butterflies flit
And hover, over
Daisies and clover.

Under the oak tree
Let's pick up
An acorn cup.

After the rain
The worms come out
And crawl about.

Bees get pollen
On legs and wings,
Clumsy things.

A snail with a house
Upon his back,
Makes a track.

I can see
The bright moon shine.
It is mine!

Silver webs
The spiders spin
Are very thin.

Petals of blossoms,
Apple and pear,
Fly in the air.

Under a leaf
Or a stone, in the dark,
A glow-worm's spark.

PART III

NONSENSICAL

A STORY

A dog and I were talking,
As we went down the street,
And as we were walking,
Whom should we meet
But a funny little bull-calf
With roses on his feet?

So then there was a bunny
Running down the street.
And the dog and the bunny
And the little calf and me,
All went together
To a house up in a tree.

The house had lots of windows
And was painted red and blue,
And inside of it was living
An old kangaroo.
He took out a hatchet
From under his bed
And hit the little bunny
On the crown of his head.
And then the little bunny
Fell down dead.

So then the little bull-calf
And the kangaroo and me
Got into a schooner
That was anchored on the sea.
Down in the scuttle
There was blood upon the floor,
And a hundred baby elephants
Running through a door.
So in came an old tramp
With a funny old friend,
And we all killed each other—
And that's the end.

GRO

AN ADVENTURE

Once I started running,
Hi diddle dum
Down all the pavements,
Just for fun.

I took the shoes and stockings
Off of both my feet,
I took off my jacket
And threw it in the street.

I met an old lady,
Hi diddle dum
And stepped on her shoe-string,
Just for fun.

I stole a banana
Off the grocer's stand,
I shook a policeman,
By the hand.

I hid behind a lamp-post,
Hi diddle dum
And booed at a baby,
Just for fun.

I found a little kitten
Covered with dirt,
And, after I had hugged it,
Put it in my shirt.

And then I got tired,
Hi diddle dum
And wondered what would happen
After all my fun.

STAND UPON YOUR HEAD

Stand upon your head!
Throw your arms around!
Fall upon the ground,
Then pretend you're dead!
Then get up and shout!
Tell the world you're Mister Jones
Who ate his sister's marrow bones.

JINGLES

JINGLE THE MONEY

Getting sent from table
Makes me weep;
Having my nails filed
Gives me a creep.

I'd like to eat bananas
Instead of prunes,
And ask for some money
To buy red balloons.

JINGLE THE SAUCEPANS

Skunk cabbage, toadstool,
Pigweed, dock—
The maid's in the parlor,
Winding up the clock.

Snapdragon, honeysuckle,
Sweet William, rose—
The cook's in the kitchen
Blowing her nose.

Dandelion, cowslip,
Milkweed, thorn—
Somewhere in China,
A child is being born.

JINGLE THE CHRISTMAS BELLS

Staying in for blizzards
Makes me cross;
I wish I owned a pony,
Or a chestnut horse.

Bed is not so awful
When you're in it;
I wish that it were Christmas
Every minute.

JINGLE THE DINNER BELL

Milk and toast
With water to heat it;
I don't like spinach.
"I won't eat it."

Porridge and sugar,
And biscuits hot;
"Finish your prunes, child."
"I will not."

Rap on your saucer,
Tinkle the bell.
"Leave the table."
"Very well."

JINGLE THE RAGPICKER'S BELL

My mother and father
Must be very old.
When I am frightened
I do as I am told.

I hate ragpickers,
I don't know why.
Little ragged children
Make me want to cry.

QUESTIONS

?

Have you ever seen a Goblin,
Have you ever seen a Gnome,
Have you ever seen an old Witch,
Brewing herbs at home?

Have you ever seen a Banshee,
In a country lane?
Have you ever seen a lost boy
Walking in the rain?

Shake in your stockings,
Shiver with fright!
Ask your little brother
To turn out the light.

? ?

I hear the shutter banging
And the creaking of the floor,
A tapping at my window
And a knocking on the door.

The wind is in the elm trees
I hear it roaring by,
There is a broken piece of moon
Rushing through the sky.

Is it burglar or hangman,
Or gravedigger, or mouse,
Making all the noises
In this spooky house?

? ? ?

Have you ever seen a tiger,
Or a cat with her eyes agleam,
Or a homesick lion weeping
Or a moth, when its wings were green?

Have you heard the roar of the leopard
Or the squeak of a mouse in the wall,
Or the elephants, trampling the jungle
At night, when the branches fall?

Have you seen the wild geese flying
Or a hawk alone on a rock,
Or the little lambs on the pasture
Coming home at dusk in a flock?

? ? ? ?

Where are all the lighted trains
Going in the dark,
And boats, when the captain steers them
With the North Star for a spark?

Where are you running to, little boy,
Dressed in tatters and rags?
And where do all the soldiers go,
Behind the drums and flags?

What time does the plowman have to rise
To steer the blade of his plow?
And what are African children
And Chinamen doing now?

Where do the men who carry pikes
On their shoulders, live in the world?
Has the president died, I wonder,
When flags hang out unfurled?

? ? ? ? ?

Have you ever been in China
Where babies' feet are tied,
Or been to the Bay of Biscay
Where ships lie out on the tide?

Have you seen the Arabian desert
Where Arabs dress in shrouds,
Or been to places in Tibet
Where mountains lie on the clouds?

Have you ever been in countries
Where cannibals eat up men,
Or gone to a little village
By the name of Bethlehem?

? ? ? ? ? ?

Down at the end of darkness,
Where the stars are shutting their eyes,
And the cocks have begun their crowing,
Who cries, who cries, who cries?

Has the Whippoorwill finished his weeping?
Are the lambs beginning to bleat?
Why is a screech owl crying
Too-whoo, too-weet, too-weet?

Where are the people going?
And the children, why are they there,
Climbing the hill in the spring time?
Sing, little birds in the air!

BOYS AND GIRLS

Heigho,
Swallows' wings,
Boys and girls
Are silly things.

Heigho,
Books and schools
Can't keep them
From being fools.

But who's a fool
And who is wise?
Heigho,
Peacocks' eyes.

Heigho,
A fool's the one
Who has forgotten
He was young.